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(3) A basis of reaction against Western culture and the influence of Catholicism. 186* 829

(4) More generally, a card of introduction to main European politics.

To ensure for herself the mastery of the Balkan Peninsula, St. Petersburg played the Serbian and the Bulgarian cards alternately, without considering the emancipation movements in those two countries as anything more than a trump card for Russian diplomacy in its struggle with Austria. With naïve egoism, Tsarism looked upon the Orthodox Slavs as the natural defenders of its interests, even at the expense of their own!

To tell the truth, none of these nations was blind to this political exploitation of a sentimental bond. In their collaboration with Russia they accepted what was capable of forwarding their aspirations but declined to play the role of clients. That explains the diplomatic games of general post in the Balkans. The end of last century saw the Serbs relying upon Austria against the Bulgarians backed by Russia; on the eve of the First World War, it was the reverse. Bismarck used to say, 'I am an Austrian in Belgrade, and a Russian in Sofia'. About 1890, the *Videlo*, a Serbian newspaper, expressed what many Balkan statesmen were thinking, but were careful not to admit: 'We have carefully studied the writings of the champions of the Slavonic idea in Russia and among the other Slav nations. These writings contain many phrases about the 'liberty' and the 'unity' of the Slavonic peoples. And amongst us there have been those who, in the inexperience of youth and the enthusiasm of poetry, have believed that Slavonic fraternity was a common temple, in which each of our peoples had the altar of its liberty. . . . The matter would not be very serious, if the Slavonic idea were merely a chimera, but, in actual fact, it is also the unexpected instrument which enables a powerful Slav State to oppress its 'brothers'. The weaker a nation is, the more removed from the form of a State, the more it is attached to the Slavonic idea. It is highly significant that the nation which is most faithful to this idea should also be the one which is the most isolated and the most powerless—the Slovak nation'. 186* 648

The movement of the nationalities was indeed drawing the Slavonic peoples towards far less abstract aims. The age of the bards and the philologists was over. They were no longer con- 186* 641 829

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cerned with taking the census of a common patrimony, but with working out their own destiny. It was the question of their future State, and of its frontiers, which demanded a solution, and was becoming yearly more imperative.

Now, if there were two ideas which were foreign to Russian Slavism, they were those two, State and frontiers. Born in an atmosphere of romanticism, the Slavophile school had no constructive views. The forces it had more or less unconsciously set in action were, above all, anti-State. The State meant Austria for the Czechs, Hungary for the Croats, Turkey for the Southern Serbs. And for the Poles it was Russia herself, or else Prussia.

As for what the possible frontiers of the liberated Slav States might one day be, Russian officialdom had not the slightest idea. In the *Memoirs* of President Masaryk, we read a suggestive anecdote. During the War he had a conversation with General Alexeiev, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army, regarding Russia's war aims. He was astounded to hear the general express the hope that the victory of the Allies would carry the Czechs to Fiume and the Serbs to Uzhorod (Carpatho-Ukraine). Seventy-five years of 'Slavonic fraternity' and Slavophile demonstrations culminated in the formulation of such an enormity!

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Thus Tsarist Russia left the Balkan Slavs a joint heritage of good and bad memories. She had, by turns, favoured or restricted their emancipation, according to the state of her relations first with the Turks, then with the Central Empires.

The Bulgarians are commonly considered to have been her spoilt children. They speak, with tender recollection, of the 'Liberating Tsar', Alexander II, whose monument stands in front of the Parliament House in Sofia. In 1915, when Bulgaria went to war with Russia, his statue was veiled. But would the 'Great Bulgaria' (still-born of the Treaty of San Stefano) have satisfied the longings of the patriots? Would she not have been converted, by the Imperial diplomacy, into a 'Trans-Danubian Province', such as the Kaulbars government endeavoured to set up? The Russians, it is true, obtained from the Porte the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate, which, freed from obedience to the Œcumenical Patriarch of Constantinople,